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SUBJECT: TURKISH MEDIA REACTION
FRIDAY, JANUARY 29, 2010

Media Highlights: Barzani in USA Supports Democratic Initiative; New Claims of US Ergenekon Ties; Obama "Doesn't Quit;" US Appropriates Climate; Camp Makhmur Discussions; New Tensions in Turkey-Armenia Protocols; Afghan London Conference More Carrot Than Stick; Arab League to Open Representation in Ankara; TV Spotlight

US Embassy Ankara - Turkey Media Reaction - January 29, 2010 as prepared by the Public Affairs Information Office

How the US is Playing

Barzani in USA: Supports Turkey's 'Democratic Initiative' (Sabah)
Pro-government Turkish media play up reports that Iraqi Kurdish leader Massoud Barzani voiced support for the GOT's democratic initiative in a speech at the Brookings Institute on 1/28. In "I Won't Support Military Operations against the PKK," Taraf reports Barzani said in response to a question that "the Iraqi Kurds would not be part of a military solution effort against the PKK." Today's Zaman, like Sabah, headlines "Barzani Urges Turkey's Kurds to Support Government Initiative" and reports that Barzani expressed "strong support" for resolving the Kurdish issue through peaceful means, and stated "We have all been convinced that military means or political pressures never bring solutions, but if this option is preferred we will not be a part of it." In addition, Today's Zaman says Barzani claimed Turkey no longer perceived the regional administration in northern Iraq as a threat against itself. Sabah and NTVMSNBC report that Barzani also noted the Turkish Constitutional Court's ruling for closing the pro-Kurdish DTP was "not appropriate." Today's Zaman opines that Barzani's talks with President Obama and Secretary Clinton came ahead of key parliamentary elections to be held in Iraq in March. Reports on the speech were also included on the semi official Anatolian News Agency, NTV, as well as the Turkish service of VOA.

New Claims for US Involvement in 'Ergenekon' (Aksam)
Mainstream Aksam gives front-page coverage to fresh allegations of US involvement in the Ergenekon network. The paper says that two of the suspects mentioned in the 'Poyrazkoy' indictment were interrogated for possible links with Americans. According to the indictment, Rescue and Submarine Commander Colonel Orhan Yucel interrogated Lt. Col. Ercan Kirectepe and Major Eren Gunay in

connection with the charges that they took weapons from Americans and buried them. The indictment charges Kirektepe and Gunay with membership in the Ergenekon network, which have attempted to dissolve the parliament. Aksam reports that a vehicle "belonging to the US Istanbul Consulate" allegedly entered the military 'Poyrazkoy' zone, with someone in the car taking photographs.

Obama Doesn't Quit

Turkish media highlight President Obama's first State of the Union address and emphasize that "he won't quit on pushing his agenda." Liberal Radikal headlines "People are Jobless and Suffering, Decreasing Unemployment is Our Main Priority," and says "Obama declared jobs must be the number one focus in 2010." In "Barack Obama: Increasing Employment Will Be Our Priority," mainstream Milliyet notes "Obama emphasized employment has to be the main priority" and that "he'll hang tough on health care reform." Mainstream Hurriyet headlines "Obama Tells People of Immense Debts and Says Main Goal Are Jobs," and opines, "stressing he won't quit, Obama promised to increase employment." In "He Seeks Support of Republicans for Unemployment," leftist-nationalist Cumhuriyet says "Obama asked Republicans for their support to work together on employment issues." Meanwhile, mainstream Sabah in "World Leader Obama 'Forgets' the World This Time" focuses on the "content of the speech" saying "Obama mainly touched on the domestic agenda including the US economy, and almost forgot foreign policy in his first State of the Union speech."

US-Turkey-Iraq to Discuss Camp Makhmur (Yeni Safak)

Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak reports the US-Turkey-Iraq "three-party mechanism" will meet in Ankara on February 3 to discuss the

ANKARA 00000151 002 OF 003

evacuation of Camp Makhmur as well as the PKK members expected to come down from the mountains, the infiltration of terrorists from northern Iraq, and drugs and arms trafficking.

US Appropriates Copenhagen Climate Accord (CNN Turk online)

CNN Turk online reports the US has "appropriated" the Copenhagen Climate Accord which has set "non-binding goals with regard to reducing green gas emissions." Todd Stern, the Obama Administration's chief climate negotiator, said the US would target reducing carbon dioxide and other gas emissions by 17 percent until 2020.

In the Headlines

Turkey-Armenia Protocols Enter Difficult Phase (Radikal)

Media continue their in-depth coverage of the "protocol disagreement" between Ankara and Yerevan with headlines such as "Armenia Drafts Bill to Withdraw Protocols," (Hurriyet), "Yerevan Puts Another Blockade on Protocols Process" (Yeni Safak), and "Armenia Pushes the Button to Withdraw Protocols," (Aksam). Media report that the Armenian presidential advisor Vigen Sargsyan told The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) that a bill which would authorize the Armenian President withdrawing his signature from the "normalization protocols" with Turkey is being readied. Turkish papers underscore that the Armenian Constitutional Court had earlier linked the implementation of the protocols to the recognition of Armenian 'genocide' claims. In "Washington Distanced to Ankara's Protocol Concerns," Zaman reports Foreign Minister Davutoglu conveyed Turkey's uneasiness to Secretary Clinton during a brief meeting on the sidelines of the Afghanistan conference in London, and comments that Washington believes Turkey should not pay too much attention to the Armenian court's justification.

In "High Armenia Tension in London," mainstream Hurriyet says yesterday's heavy diplomatic traffic among Turkey, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia in London failed to defuse the tensions between Ankara and Yerevan. The paper reports that FM Davutoglu told FM Nalbandian that the Armenian Constitutional Court decision was against the spirit of the protocols and demanded guarantees that Armenia would abide by the blueprint. Nalbandian reportedly said the court decision was not contradicting the protocols. The two ministers, however, agreed to discuss the issue again at a security conference to be held in Munich next month, says Hurriyet.

Commentaries on Turkey-Armenia

Sami Kohen of mainstream Milliyet advises a comprehensive win-win approach on the protocol process and does not quite agree with "Armenia will suffer more if the protocols are put on shelf" argument: "Not only Armenia, Turkey also will face problems in international platforms. Additionally the issue itself will continue to become one of the key factors before the advancement of Turkish-American ties. Therefore, we should think about the benefits for both sides when the protocols are fully ratified." Erdal Safak of pro-government/mainstream Sabah thinks a bit differently: "Armenia is trying to kill the protocols. Unless Armenia is put international pressure on the Karabakh issue and until a result is achieved, there seems no way to see protocol ratification." Ferai Tinc in mainstream Hurriyet calls the protocols "at stake" but notes that responsibility is distributed among Turkey and Armenia: "Turkey put out a clear Karabakh condition while Armenia tried to insert a genocide interpretation. There were efforts on both sides to force an impasse on protocol ratification. Given Yerevan's latest try to undo the signature, realization of the protocols is headed toward an impossible end."

Afghanistan London Conference: Carrot and Sticks

In "Carrot Instead of Stick" mainstream Sabah reports that the international committee, which had previously been "collecting soldiers against the Taliban," this time met in London to collect money to convince the Taliban "to lay down their arms." In "Conditional Support for the Taliban," Islamist-oriented Zaman, as

ANKARA 00000151 003 OF 003

well as Sabah, notes that by day's end only \$140 million had been collected out of a targeted \$500 million. Meanwhile, mainstream Milliyet headlines "Karzai Invites Taliban to Parliament" and reports that the Afghan Government plans to invite Taliban members to the "Loya Jirga" assembly to discuss the reintegration plan. In a related story, under the headline "Ankara is Playing a Unique Role" Sabah reports that State Department spokesman Philip Crowley praised Turkey "as a key member of NATO and ISAF, Turkey plays a unique and important role in Afghanistan." All media prominently report that Afghan President Karzai in opening remarks thanked Turkey for hosting an Afghan-Pakistan conference in Istanbul and urged Saudi Arabia to increase their contribution for Afghanistan projects.

Arab League to Open Representation in Ankara (Zaman)

Islamist-oriented Zaman reports following a recent acceleration of ties with Turkey, the Arab League has decided to open a representation office in Ankara. Moroccan diplomat Muhammad Fatih al-Nasiri has been appointed to head the office, which is expected to open next week in Ankara.

TV Spotlight (CNN Turk)

Prime Minister Erdogan met Thursday with labor union Turk-Is to discuss the problems of workers who have been on strike for 46 days in protest of the privatization of former state tobacco and liquor monopoly Tekel.

On January 29-30, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov will visit Turkey for talks with President Gul and PM Erdogan.

Prime Minister Erdogan will deliver his monthly address to the nation in a televised speech Friday evening.

NATO defense ministers will meet in Istanbul on February 4-5.

President Gul will visit India and Bangladesh from February 7-13.

A draft bill for the establishment of Human Rights Institution has been submitted to the parliament for approval.

The IMF's First Deputy Managing Director John Lipsky said they were holding productive talks with Turkey.

Greek PM Papandreou said it was time to seek better ties with Turkey and other neighbors.

The UN Disaster Risk Reduction said the situation in Haiti would deteriorate when storms season starts in May.

Denmark said Thursday it would limit the use in public of the burka and veils worn by some Muslim women, but stopped short of introducing a law banning the garments.

JEFFREY